

Artemisia cana ssp. cana / Pascopyrum smithii Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation

COMMON NAME	Coaltown Sagebrush / Western-Wheat Grass Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation
SYNONYM	Silver Sagebrush / Western Wheatgrass Shrub Prairie
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Herbaceous vegetation (V)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Perennial graminoid vegetation (V.A)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Temperate or subpolar grassland with a sparse shrub layer (V.A.7)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP	Natural/semi-natural (V.A.7.N)
FORMATION	Medium-tall temperate or subpolar grassland with a sparse needle-leaved or microphyllous evergreen shrub layer (V.A.7.N.e.)
ALLIANCE	<i>Artemisia cana</i> Shrub Herbaceous Alliance
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL	1
USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM	Upland

RANGE

Globally

This community has only been identified in northeastern Wyoming.

Devils Tower National Monument

This community occurs on the Belle Fourche River floodplain. Individuals or small stands of *Artemisia cana* occasionally are found elsewhere in the park.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Globally

This community is found on flat to gently sloping alluvial terraces and fans near larger creeks and rivers. Thilenius et al. (1995) found that most stands were raised at least 1 m above the general floodplain. Soils are formed from alluvium and are medium to fine textured. Flooding may occur infrequently.

Devils Tower National Monument

This community occurs on level sites on alluvial soils of the Belle Fourche River floodplain.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Globally

Strata

Short shrub

Herbaceous

Species

Artemisia cana

Pascopyrum smithii, *Poa pratensis*, *Bouteloua gracilis*

Devils Tower National Monument

Strata

Short shrub

Herbaceous

Species

Artemisia cana, *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*

Poa pratensis, *Pascopyrum smithii*

DIAGNOSTIC SPECIES

Globally

Artemisia cana, *Pascopyrum smithii*, *Poa pratensis*

USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program
Devils Tower National Monument

Devils Tower National Monument
Artemisia cana

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Globally

This community is dominated by moderately dense to dense graminoids less than 1 meter tall. *Pascopyrum smithii* is usually the most abundant of these. *Poa pratensis*, *Bouteloua gracilis*, and *Nassella viridula* are also common. *Calamovilfa longifolia*, *Stipa comata*, and *Oryzopsis hymenoides* are sometimes present. Short shrubs, especially *Artemisia cana* and sometimes *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*, have 10-25% cover. Forbs and non-vascular species are rare.

Devils Tower National Monument

This community is characterized by stands of *Artemisia cana* often with *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*. Shrub coverage typically ranges from 10 to 25%. *S. occidentalis* may be locally dominant. Herbaceous species are predominantly graminoid with *Poa pratensis* and *Pascopyrum smithii* being the most common.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES Information not available.

CONSERVATION RANK G3?

RANK JUSTIFICATION

DATABASE CODE CEG001556

COMMENTS

Globally

This type appears to be very closely related to *Artemisia cana* / *Pascopyrum smithii* Shrubland which is found in Montana, western North Dakota, and western South Dakota. The most apparent difference is in the cover of shrubs. Further comparison may result in the combination of these two types.

REFERENCES

Thilenius, J. F., G. R. Brown, and A. L. Medina. 1995. Vegetation on semi-arid rangelands, Cheyenne River Basin, Wyoming. General Technical Report RM-GTR-263. Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, USDA Forest Service, Fort Collins, Colorado. 60 pp.